

In the Claims:

Claim 1 (original): A cuff for medical use wherein the cuff is made of a flexible openwork structure of a medically acceptable metal.

Claim 2 (original): The cuff as claimed in claim 1 wherein the cuff is formed to provide one of the following : a cuff for a heart valve ; a cuff for a line ; a barrier cuff for a peritoneal dialysis catheter; an annuloplasty band; an annuloplasty ring.

Claim 3 (original): A cuff for a mechanical heart valve, wherein the cuff is made of a flexible openwork structure of a medically acceptable wire and provides an inner annular rim dimensioned to fit around the perimeter of the heart valve and formed integrally with an outer annulus of larger diameter than said inner annular rim.

Claim 4 (currently amended): The cuff as claimed in claim 1, ~~any one of the preceding claims~~ wherein the flexible openwork structure is selected from one of the following : knitted wire, woven wire, wire fabricated into a chainmail structure, wire formed into a random "steel wool" structure, ~~perforated metal plate~~.

Claim 5 (currently amended): The cuff as claimed in claim 4 ~~any one of the preceding claims~~, wherein the metal is selected from: titanium; a medically approved titanium alloy.

Claim 6 (new): A method of promoting tissue ingrowth and endothelialisation and minimising the risk of foreign body infection following the insertion of a cuff in a living subject, said method comprising providing a cuff made of a flexible openwork structure of a medically acceptable metal.

Claim 7 (new): A method of promoting tissue ingrowth and endothelialisation, minimising the risk of foreign body infection and minimising paravalvular leaks following the fitting of a prosthetic heart valve mounted upon a cuff, in a living subject, and said method comprising the provision of a prosthetic heart valve having a peripheral cuff made of a flexible openwork structure of a medically acceptable metal.

Claim 8 (new): The method as claimed in claim 7, wherein the cuff provides an inner annular rim dimensioned to fit around the perimeter of the heart valve and formed integrally with an outer annulus of larger diameter than said inner annular rim.

Claim 9 (new): The method as claimed in claim 6, wherein the flexible openwork structure is selected from one of the following: knitted wire, woven wire, wire fabricated into a chainmail structure, wire formed into a random "steel wool" structure.

Claim 10 (new): The method as claimed in claim 9, wherein the metal is selected from: titanium; a medically approved titanium alloy.

Claim 11 (new): The cuff as claimed in claim 2, wherein the flexible openwork structure is selected from one of the following : knitted wire, woven wire, wire fabricated into a chainmail structure, wire formed into a random "steel wool" structure.

Claim 12 (new): The cuff as claimed in claim 3, wherein the flexible openwork structure is selected from one of the following : knitted wire, woven wire, wire fabricated into a chainmail structure, wire formed into a random "steel wool" structure.

Claim 13 (new): The cuff as claimed in claim 11, wherein the metal is selected from: titanium; a medically approved titanium alloy.

Claim 14 (new): The cuff as claimed in claim 12, wherein the metal is selected from: titanium; a medically approved titanium alloy.

Claim 15 (new): The method as claimed in claim 7, wherein the flexible openwork structure is selected from one of the following: knitted wire, woven wire, wire fabricated into a chainmail structure, wire formed into a random "steel wool" structure.

Claim 16 (new): The method as claimed in claim 8, wherein the flexible openwork structure is selected from one of the following: knitted wire, woven wire, wire fabricated into a chainmail structure, wire formed into a random "steel wool" structure.

Claim 17 (new): The method as claimed in claim 15, wherein the metal is selected from: titanium; a medically approved titanium alloy.

Claim 18 (new): The method as claimed in claim 16, wherein the metal is selected from: titanium; a medically approved titanium alloy.